CHINA BULLETIN

of the

FAR EASTERN OFFICE

Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC/USA

156 - 5th Avenue, New York 10.

Vol. IX, No. 11 May 25, 1959

Francis P. Jones, Editor Wallace C. Merwin, Executive Secretary

LIN YU-TANG'S RETURN TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian Life for April 15 has an interesting and moving article by the well-known writer Lin Yu-tang, entitled "Why I Came Back To Christianity." His answer to that question is, "I wish to re-enter that knowledge of God and love of God which Jesus revealed with such clarity and simplicity."

Note that this is a re-entry. His father was a Presbyterian minister in a mountain village back from Amoy, and when he went to Shanghai for higher education he was preparing for the ministry. But on graduation he went to Peking to teach, and there he turned to humanism. In his best seller The Importance of Living he frankly calls himself a pagan. For thirty years he was satisfied with Confucian humanism. "Then below the surface of my life a disquiet, born of both reflection and experience, began to set in."

At his wife's request he occasionally went to church, but was usually repelled by the quality of the preaching he heard there. Then she took him to the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, where the preaching of Dr. David Read struck an answering chord in his heart, and on December 3, 1957, he joined that church. Of that event he says, "Looking back on my life, I know that for thirty years I lived in this world like an orphan. I am an orphan no longer. Where I had been drifting, I have arrived. The Sunday morning when I rejoined the Christian church was a homecoming."

The keenness of his thinking makes his comment on the Chinese religions of interest: "Like humanism, Confucianism, for all the high morality of its teachings, was not good enough simply because man on his own had so often and so disastrously shown he was not that good. Buddhism, though a religion of mercy, is based on the philosophy that all this sensuous world is only an illusion. The best the Buddhist has to offer to the world is, 'The pity of it all.' The teachings of Taoism come very near to the Sermon on the Mount. But the back-to-nature and beware-of-progress appeal inherent in Taoism is neither congenial to the modern mind nor helpful in solving man's modern problems."

Y. T. WU TWELVE YEARS AGO

Our attention has just been called to a statement made by Y. T. Wu in August 1947 at a meeting of the World Committee of the YMCA in Edinburgh. His subject was "Christianity and the Ideological Conflict." He begins by pointing out that Communism is growing faster in China than Christianity, that it offers freedom and equality, an economy of abundance and a classless society, and claims to be the only basis for genuine democracy. But, he says, the tragedy of the situation is that "from the Christian point of view Communism is inadequate,

Issued bi-weekly to keep mission boards and missionaries informed on Christian work in China. Information from Chinese church magazines and other Chinese sources is passed on a objectively as possible, with a minimum of interpretation. When interpretation is necessary, it is enclosed in parentheses as the comment of the editor. ANNUAL RATES: Domestic, $2.50; Overseas, Firstclass $4.00, Secondclass $3.00. Airmail $5.00 in 15¢ zone, $7.00 in 25¢ zone.

both as a method of work and as a philosophy of life. Communism is inadequate because its basic philosophy--dialectical materialism--is wholly preoccupied with the relative (things that change) and has little to do with the absolute (things that change not). It is so concerned with becoming--to use another philosophic term--that it precludes any concept of being. Because of this, materialism has to be atheistic, because theism believes in a cosmic being which materialism cannot conceive. Materialism also has the dangerous tendency of regarding human persons not as persons but as means to a social end. These weaknesses have been responsible for many of the faults we find in the Communist system today."

He goes on however to say that the deeper tragedy lies in the fact that Christianity has not learned to accept Communism as a challenge but instead only looks upon it as an enemy. Christianity is deeply involved in the national and social inequality of the past, and forgets that there is such a thing as "the revenge of history." Instead of being self-righteous and unforgiving, we should season our indignation with repentance and humility. And we must deal with the basic problems of social and national injustice in the Christian way - "we must do one better than the Communists." "If that is done, Communism cannot be a menace to the things we hold dear."

THE TIBETAN QUESTION

The world-wide criticism of Communist China's ruthless suppression of the Tibetan revolt has stung the Communist authorities to mobilize their whole propaganda machinery to try to soften the effect of this blow to their prestige, and to maintain the picture they have tried to build up, of their government being a friend to all oppressed peoples.

Meetings have been held all over China for the purpose of expressing support of the Government's policy. In Peking representatives of all the religions met, and Rev. Newton Tsiang, described as President of Yenching Theological Seminary, spoke for the Protestants in denouncing the Tibetan rebellion. He said, "We Christians firmly approve the policy of the Government with regard to Tibet." Dr. Wu Yi-fang echoed the same sentiments in a speech in the National People's Congress on April 26, where she said, "The more than 600 million people of China will not in any circumstances tolerate any interference in China's internal affairs. YW Secretar Cora Deng told the All-China Youth Federation that the people of Tibet lead a life of misery. "Such a system must be reformed, and this reformation is the greatest act of humanitarianism toward the Tibetan people."

The criticism in India has cut deepest of all. Over and over again the New China News Agency charges that these criticisms come from "Indian expansionists", though it presents not the slightest evidence to substantiate that charge. When Madame Gandhi criticized China, she quoted her former husband to the effect that the most important thing is "to speak the truth, frankly and fearlessly." The Ta Kung Pao challenges her on that point, and asks if she was speaking the truth. She had said, "I am afraid that we can't do much to help that country in the present situation." The Ta Kung Pao says, "Was she speaking the truth when she called Tibet a 'country'?" The editor's point is that Tibet is not a country, but only an inviolable part of Chinese territory.

Endicott has also rallied to the support of the Chinese Government. Although his conscienc troubled him over the Hungarian incident, he evidently finds no difficulty over Tibet, and devotes three fourths of his April Newsletter to praising what the Communists have done there. He charges that the incident is being made use of by "rocket-base brass hats in Washington, the Chiang Kai-shek remnants and the Indian reactionaries," who will try, he says, "to use this occasion to set up a 'Free Tibet' government."

FOUR MONTHS IN THE COUNTRY by Kiang Wen-han (continued)

4. The Farmers Welcome the Commune.

It was the middle of September when we began to set up the commune organization. The farmers had already learned, through debate and discussion, that this was the most efficient form of organization for promoting the Great Leap Forward in production. Not that the higher grade of co-operatives then in existence were not good, only that they were not suitable for the

Great Leap Forward as developed in last year's rectification program and the General Line. The co-operatives were too small in scale (The largest farm co-operative was about 300 families, while the smallest ones were only 20 or 30.), and so the capital available to them was too little, and the use of labor and materials not flexible enough; this proved to be a hindrance to farm mechanization and electrification, large scale planting plans, the fighting of natural disasters, and large construction projects, such as canals, roads, local factories, specialized production, and large scale cultural projects. In order to lift farmers out of the poverty and backwardness of several thousand years, it was necessary to have a greatly increased production, especially to increase the cash return, and to develop rural industries, and for this a change in rural organization was necessary; this truth was already well known to the farmers.

The "Liberation People's Commune" which we inaugurated on the October 1 Independence Day last year comprised five villages and one town, being a merger of 42 higher co-operatives. It included more than 12,000 families with a total population of 78,000; it had 77,000 mou of land and a farm labor force of 22,000. It included within its scope the five classes of laborer, peasant, merchant, student and soldier, all united and serving the one common plan. Accordingly, the commune was not just a farm organization, but was enlarged in scope to become a fundamental unit in our socialistic structure, comprising all these classes of society, and was at the same time a fundamental governmental unit. This was necessary if production was to be increased, and the establishment of socialism hastened. It was a combination of the "little society" and the "big society" which was quite in line with the requirements of our over-all agricultural program, and so was enthusiastically supported by the farmers, as shown in the many petitions and resolutions which they presented to the authorities. Although the weather on Independence Day was not good the people were in gala mood, wearing new clothes, shooting firecrackers, and happily marching ten or twenty li, 10,000 strong, to Ch'uehchia Bridge to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Liberation People's Commune.

At the same time they raised a new standard of production, and strengthened their fall program, resolving to leave no field unused, and thus greeted the organization of the Commune with a program of practical action. With great joy the people came to believe that within three or four years, just relying on their own efforts, they could achieve the following standards of production: 2,000 lbs. of grain per person per year; 60 lbs. of pork per person per month; 20 lbs. of oil per person per month; two chickens per person per month; 30 lbs. of cotton per person per year; 60 lbs. of vegetables per person per month. In addition, there will be new living quarters, with as much as ten square meters of floor space per person, with hygienic installations. In the village there will be a cultural center, theater, movie house, swimming pool, gymnasium, broadcasting center, higher, secondary and elementary schools, library, kindergarten, nursery, hospital, old people's home, communal dining hall, scientific research center, a central administration building, postoffice, bank, and all kinds of shops and service agencies. As Chairman Mao said, "Fight hard for three years and you will fundamentally change the face of China's agriculture." This prophecy, now that the communes have been organized, is no longer an empty dream, but is quite within the realm of possibility.

5. A Concern not only with Production but also with Living.

After the organization of the Commune, the villages universally carried out the plan of the Three Changes and the Four Small Changes. The Three Changes are: A military type of organization; looking on production as a battle; communal living. The people realized that in order to increase production they had to fight with nature, taking the fields as their battle ground, and their farm tools as weapons, and that in farm work to take the attitude of a "young gentleman" will not do. As a matter of fact, before the Commune was organized, the people in their production work had already proposed a number of battle cries, as in Chengchiatse, where they called their "seven thorough-goings" by the name of "front line work", whereas work in the dining hall and nursery was called "work behind the lines"; and the work of each season was spoken of as a separate battle. So the so-called militarization of farm work does not consist in such orders as "At ease" and "Attention", but rather indicates an organization with more system and discipline. In fact the Three Changes are carried out under the democratic principle that every important plan must first be discussed and approved by the mass of the people.

Along with the Three Changes are the Four Small Changes, which are required to obviate

the hindrances to women taking their part in the Three Changes. These are: the collectivization of children, the communization of eating, the specialization of night-soil collecting, and the organization of laundry and mending. These are necessary in order to liberate the labor of women. In Tsungts'un, even before the organization of the Commune, there was a communal dining hall, as well as a nursery, but the number making use of them was not large. After the Commune was organized the Four Small Changes were carried out completely, and all those who had not taken part before in the dining hall now did so. The number in the nursery also greatly increased. Work teams for the kindergarten, laundry, mending, and night-soil collecting were organized. For economy's sake the people gladly moved out of their homes, taking their bedding and household utensils, and local residents (My guess is that this name indicates local residents who for some special reason are not members of the Commune.) contributed their labor, and thus women were speedily liberated from the work which had formerly bound them down.

The Party and the Government, besides being concerned to promote production, also pay attention to the living conditions of the people. They see to it that in the communal dining halls the food is sufficient, is hot, is hygienic, and as good as possible. The nurseries and kindergartens take good care of the children, and give them good teaching. The authorities constantly urge that respect be paid to the five kinds of public officials: cooks in the dining hall, teachers in the kindergarten, nurses in the nursery, public nurses and hygiene officials, so that these may feel that their services are as important and glorious as direct production work. The authorities insist that workers in agricultural production must be guaranteed their definite rest periods - they must have eight hours sleep every day, and one day off every two weeks (for several years now agricultural workers have not had any vacation). At the time of their monthly periods women are exempted from heavy labor, work in cold water, and night work. The authorities have also directed that in the year-end accounting, at least 90% of the people shall receive more than they did the year before, and no one shall receive less. Such concern for the life of the people, as shown by the Party and the Government, is something that China has never seen before. (to be concluded)

MISSIONARY NEWS

Recent deaths: The Rev. James Neave of Rockwood, Canada, on April 7. He was a missionary in West China from 1897 to 1936, first with the British and Foreign Bible Society and then with the United Church of Canada. Mr. Clinton Nevius Laird, Professor of Chemistry at Canton Christian College and its successor Lingnan University from 1905 to 1942, died in Pomona, California, on March 7.

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia held its annual meeting in New York on May 12. This Board is the primary supporter of Tunghai University in Taiwan and of Chungchi College in Hong Kong, and has also supplementary responsibilities for universities in Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines. This year it reported that the surpluses carried down from 1950 have now been used up, and this higher education program will suffer unless new sources of income can be uncovered. One potential source to be explored is the large number of missionary children now in good jobs, who ought to be interested in supporting a program of higher education in Asia, and an m.k. (missionary kids) mailing list is now in process of compilation. Our readers are invited to cooperate in this compilation by sending lists to the Board office at 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

CHURCH NEWS

A recent visitor to Peking--a former missionary--has reported that the Anglican Cathedral in the southwest corner of the Tartar City is now full of machinery.

Information reaching Hong Kong from Shanghai speaks of the control over baptisms that is now being exercised by the Religious Affairs Bureau. Infants may be baptized without question, but when an adult wishes to be baptized he must first undergo an examination and satisfy the authorities as to his political thinking, his political background and his political appearance (mien-mao).

The walls of the Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai have recently been plastered with some 300 posters all in denunciation of its pastor, the Rev. Z.S. Zia. It is reported that his older sister, living in Hangchow, recently committed suicide under pressure. The Sungkiang Methodist District Superintendent now has a lowly job writing labels. Two women workers, formerly working in his office, have returned to their homes.

A British reporter recently visited a commune in Manchuria, and found a group of Christians meeting regularly there.